



# BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION  
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
(518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
QUAD \_\_\_\_\_  
SERIES \_\_\_\_\_  
NEG. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR NAME: Cynthia Howk DATE: Dec., 1994

YOUR ADDRESS: 133 S. Fitzhugh St.  
Rochester, NY 14608 TELEPHONE: 546-7029

ORGANIZATION (if any): The Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc.

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## IDENTIFICATION

- former  
1. BUILDING NAME(S): Phelps Store / former Hoagland Florist  
2. COUNTY: Monroe TOWN/CITY: Greece VILLAGE/HAMLET: North Greece  
3. STREET LOCATION: 631 North Greece Road (S.W. corner of Latta Rd.)  
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public ☐ b. private ☒ 37 Kuhn Rd.  
5. PRESENT OWNER: Jewett C. & David Butler ADDRESS: Rochester, NY 14612  
6. USE: Original: store/residence Present: vacant  
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes ☒ No ☐  
Interior accessible: Explain undergoing renovation for office use.

## DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard ☒ b. stone ☐ c. brick ☐ d. board and batten ☐  
e. cobblestone ☐ f. shingles ☐ g. stucco ☐ other: west wing = asphalt  
Roof = asphalt shingles. Foundation = pargeted shingles.  
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints ☒ fieldstone.  
b. wood frame with light members ☐  
(if known) c. masonry load bearing walls ☐  
d. metal (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
e. other \_\_\_\_\_  
10. CONDITION: a. excellent ☐ b. good ☐ c. fair ☒ d. deteriorated ☐  
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site ☒ b. moved ☐ if so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

(see continuation sheet)

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:

"This is an interesting building. We should certainly encourage its rehabilitation. Let's make it a 'green plus' that could be raised to 'red' if the building is sympathetically rehabilitated. It's a conspicuous site." P.Malo.

COLOR CODE

Green plus





14. THREATS TO BUILDING: a. none known ☐ b. zoning ☒ c. roads ☒  
d. developers ☐ e. deterioration ☐  
f. other: located adjacent to two heavily-trafficked roads
15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:  
a. barn ☐ b. carriage house ☐ c. garage ☐  
d. privy ☐ e. shed ☐ f. greenhouse ☐  
g. shop ☐ h. gardens ☐  
i. landscape features: \_\_\_\_\_  
j. other: parking lot (unpaved) to west of building
16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):  
a. open land ☐ b. woodland ☐  
c. scattered buildings ☐  
d. densely built-up ☒ e. commercial ☒  
f. industrial ☐ g. residential ☒  
h. other: at major N. Greece hamlet intersection
17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:  
(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

( see continuation sheet)

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

(see continuation sheet)

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: c. 1850 - 1852
- ARCHITECT: not determined
- BUILDER: not determined
20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

(see continuation Sheet)

21. SOURCES: (see continuation sheet)

22. THEME: commercial: 19th century store and post office

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11c.

The square cupola, with 12, round-arched windows, has been removed from the top of the hipped roof; however, the cupola roof and decorative finial have been set atop the original base of the cupola (date unknown).

A corbelled brick chimney has been removed from the ridgeline of the south wing (date unknown).

The one-story, shed-roofed front porch (east elevation of the main block), with its four turned posts and curved brackets, has been removed (date unknown).

The original, 3-pane, storefront windows have been replaced with contemporary glass & the rectangular transom windows have been covered with plywood.

The base of the cupola, the west elevation of the main block, the west elevation of the south wing, the 1-story additions on the south elevation, and the west, two-story wing are clad with early 20th-century asphalt shingles (over wood clapboard siding).

The wrought iron handrailing, concrete and concrete block steps on the facade (east elevation) were added c. 1950s-70s.

A contemporary veneer of brick has been added onto the foundation of the east elevation (under the storefront), mid-late 1900s.

A long, double-hung window on north elevation of the main, 2-1/2-story block has been covered over with clapboard.

On the west center, 1-1/2-story section (west of the main block): one vertical and five, small, rectangular contemporary windows have been added on the north elevation (mid-late 1900s); a large, doorway opening has been covered over with T-111 siding on the north elevation (c. 1980s).

Several, 1-story, shed-roofed additions have been added onto the south elevation (early-mid 1900s?).

On the west, 2-story, gable-roof wing: the north facade (faces Latta Rd.) has been remodeled c. 1970s-80s with contemporary windows and permastone siding.

The interior of the main, 2-1/2-story section has been

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remodeled for contemporary commercial use, (mid-1900s).

The building is presently undergoing interior and exterior renovation for use as a commercial office (Wolfert-Butler Insurance Agency), 1994-95.

17. Located in the northwest quadrant of the town, the historic Phelps Store Building is prominently situated on a 150-foot by 188-foot lot on the southwest corner of North Greece and Latta Roads in the hamlet of North Greece. An unpaved parking lot is located to the west of the building. A small lawn is located to the south. The building is located at the main four corners of the hamlet and dominates this commercial intersection. Across the street to the east is the DeMay Hotel (1909); to the north is a c. 1980s gas station/mini-market; the contemporary North Greece Fire District No. 1 fire house (c. 1976) is on the northeast corner. To the south and west is a small residential area of mid-19th to early 20th-century houses.

18. The Phelps Store Building is an example of a mid-19th-century, Italianate-style, commercial building. Constructed c. 1850-1852, it is frame construction. The building consists of four main sections: the 2-1/2-story, hipped-roof, main block; the 1-story, gabled-roof, south wing; the 1-1/2-story, shed-roof, west center section; and the 1-1/2-story, gabled-roof west wing. Several, small, 1-story, shed-roof additions have been added onto the south elevation of the center section in the early-mid-1900s.

The original clapboard siding is visible on the east elevation, north elevation and parts of south elevation. A variety of early and mid-20th century synthetic siding materials have been installed on the west elevations (asphalt shingles, wood shingles); south elevation (asphalt shingles); and north elevation of the west wing (asphalt shingles, permastone veneer). The building sits on a targeted, fieldstone foundation.

Fenestration is irregular and consists of a variety of window types/sizes. The east elevation has 2/2, double-hung windows and contemporary, large-pane storefront windows. The north elevation has: 2/2, double-hung windows in the main block;

18. continued

five, small, contemporary windows and one 1/1, double-hung window in the 1-1/2-story, west center section; and two, contemporary storefront windows and a pointed-arch, multi-pane, gable window in the west wing. The south elevation of the west wing has an oculus window in the gable. The 1-story, south wing has 2/2-double-hung windows on the south and west elevations.

The 2-1/2-story, hipped-roof, main block is of square massing and four-bays-wide by four-bays-deep. Originally, a hipped roof cupola with 12, round-arch windows and a decorative, pointed, wood finial topped the roof of this main section. The cupola has been removed, but its hipped roof and finial remain atop the square cupola base. The storefront of the Phelps Store Building has always been located on the east elevation of this main block. Historic photos show the earlier appearance of the storefront: a center entrance flanked by two storefront windows. These storefront windows each consisted of a large, center, 3-pane display window, topped by two, rectangular transom windows and solid, wood panels beneath the display windows. The storefront was sheltered by a shed-roof, open porch with four, turned wood posts, curved, decorative brackets and wood deck. At present, the porch has been removed, the transom windows covered with plywood and the 3-pane display windows replaced with two, large, contemporary panes of glass. Contemporary, c. 1970s signage (HOAGLAND FLORIST - Greeting Cards \* Craft Supplies) is located over the storefront windows. The wrought iron handrailing and concrete block/concrete stairs are late 20th century additions.

To the south of the main, 2-1/2-story, main section, is the one-story, gable-roof, south wing. This wing served as the residential quarters for the Phelps family (when they ran the store) and is now apartments. Little changed from its original design, it is clad with wood clapboard siding and has 2/2, double-hung windows. A contemporary, round, metal, woodstove chimney is located on the west elevation of the south wing.

To the west of the main, 2-1/2-story main block, is the 1-1/2-story, west center section. This section has only a north elevation and a south elevation, as it is located between the main block and the west wing. It is clad in wood clapboards and has six contemporary windows on the north elevation. Several, 1-story, shed-roofed additions have been

18. continued

added onto the south elevation (early-mid-20th century).

To the west of the 1-1/2-story, west center section, is the 1-1/2-story, gable-roof, west wing. This building features a contemporary (c. 1970s-80s) storefront, but retains a distinctive, pointed-arch, multi-pane gable window on the facade (north elevation). Several, small, multi-pane windows are located on the west and south elevations; the south elevation also has an oculus window in the gable. A late-20th-century, cinder block chimney is located atop the ridgeline of the west wing. The west wing has the address of 3569 Latta Road and is presently the location of North Greece Glass and Graphics, a commercial business.

20. Built c. 1850-1852, the Phelps Store Building is architecturally significant as a distinctive example of an mid-19th-century, commercial building in the town. It is the only surviving example of an Italianate-style commercial building in Greece. As the location of the community's post office and only general store for many decades, it is historically significant for its association with the development of the North Greece and its prominence as a gathering place/commercial facility for local residents for over 140 years.

This mid-19th, century, Italianate, commercial building has design features that are characteristic of that style: a main, 2-1/2-story block with square massing and hipped roof (also, there was originally a cupola, now removed). The south, west center and west wings are of mid-19th-century vernacular design.

The Italianate style belongs to the picturesque movement in architecture during the second half of the 19th century. The style was loosely inspired by the rural architecture of northern Italy. The architectural pattern books of Andrew Jackson Downing of the 1840s and '50s helped to popularize the style. This is the only surviving example of an Italianate style commercial building in the town of Greece.

The architectural significance of this important building would be enhanced by the the reconstruction of the cupola (atop the main, hipped roof), as well as the removal of the 20th-century synthetic siding (asphalt, permastone, wood shingles) and the repair/re-painting of the original wood

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clapboard siding.

The origins of the North Greece hamlet date back to 1807, when a dirt road (North Greece Road) was surveyed, connecting Ridge Road and Latta Road. This early road originally ended at Latta Road.

Around Dr. Hiel Rowley's property on the southwest corner (this site), a crossroads community began to develop and by the 1830s, North Greece had a post office with Amos McKinney as postmaster. Here, on the southwest corner, the Alfred Phelps Store became a hub around which community life revolved, and by 1850, Phelps was postmaster.

The crossroads was known as "Jenks Corner" for many years. William Jenkins, born in England in 1800, a local farmer, may have given his name to the crossroads. The community was known as "Jenkins' Corners" or "down at Jenks" to the natives. However, Rev. A. Jenks was the first Methodist circuit rider to the area, so the origin of the nickname "Jenks" is uncertain.

The blacksmith shop in the barn now standing just south of the DeMay Hotel and the Methodist Church, once on the northwest corner, were other important facets of community life.

The 1852 county map shows the intersection of North Greece and Latta Roads. The hamlet is marked as "Jenkins Corners." There is a building with "Isaac Miller" listed as owner on this southwest corner of the intersection. This c. 1852 building was probably the 2-1/2-story main block, later enlarged with the south, west center, and west wings.

The building was subsequently purchased by Henry C. Phelps. Phelps is listed in the 1869-70 county directory as a dealer in dry goods and groceries.

The 1872 county map shows this site with "H.C. Phelps" as owner. The footprint of the building is rectangular with a small rear addition on the center of the west elevation. The post office is shown to be in the building on the southeast corner of the intersection (not here in the Phelps Store). The Methodist Episcopal church is located on the northwest corner and the L.Combs Wagon Shop is situated on the northeast corner of the intersection.

20. continued

Henry C. Phelps was twice appointed post master, in 1880 and 1897. By the turn of the century when he was 62, H.C. Phelps continued to maintain his store: "H.C. Phelps - Dry Goods, Staples & Fancy Groceries" here.

The 1902 county map shows this site with a large, frame buildings marked as "H.C. Phelps Store." The footprint of the building shown on this map is almost same as the present configuration of the building. There is the main, 2-1/2-story block, the west center section, and the west wing. The 1-story, south wing is not indicated on this map, although it appears to date from the 19th century. A building marked "Store" is located on the southeast corner, and the "Carriage Shop" is still located on the northeast corner of the intersection.

An extensive description of the Phelps Store, its history, and the Phelps family (especially H.C. Phelps) was written in c. 1970-71 by local writer/historian, William Aeberli. (See attachments).

The 1924 county map shows this site as a .75-acre lot with a frame building marked, "H.C. Phelps." Again, the main block (marked "Post Office"), the west center section, and the west wing are shown. The south wing, however, is not indicated in the building footprint shown on the map. When H.C. Phelps retired in 1925, this corner establishment continued on under new management. From 1925-1929, Walter and Emma Rowley owned the store.

In 1929, William and Florence Lensen purchased the property. The 1930 suburban directory shows this property as "Lensen & Bailey, general merchandise, North Greece Post Office." The owners, William H. & Florence Lensen resided here. Their partner, John Bailey (and his wife) also lived at this address. The Lensens owned the store until 1932.

The next owners were Joseph and Anna Vatter from 1932-1948, followed by Alfred and Marth Eppenstein, 1948-1965. The 1959 county map shows this property. The large, frame building is shown on a 125-foot-wide by 188.25-foot-deep lot. In 1965, the property was purchased by Louis and Joanne Bonsignore, who continued here until 1981 (the store was called the "North Greece Food Market."). From 1981-1993, the property was owned by John Watkins; the "Hoagland Florist \* Greeting Cards and Craft Supplies" was located in the main block.



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20. continued

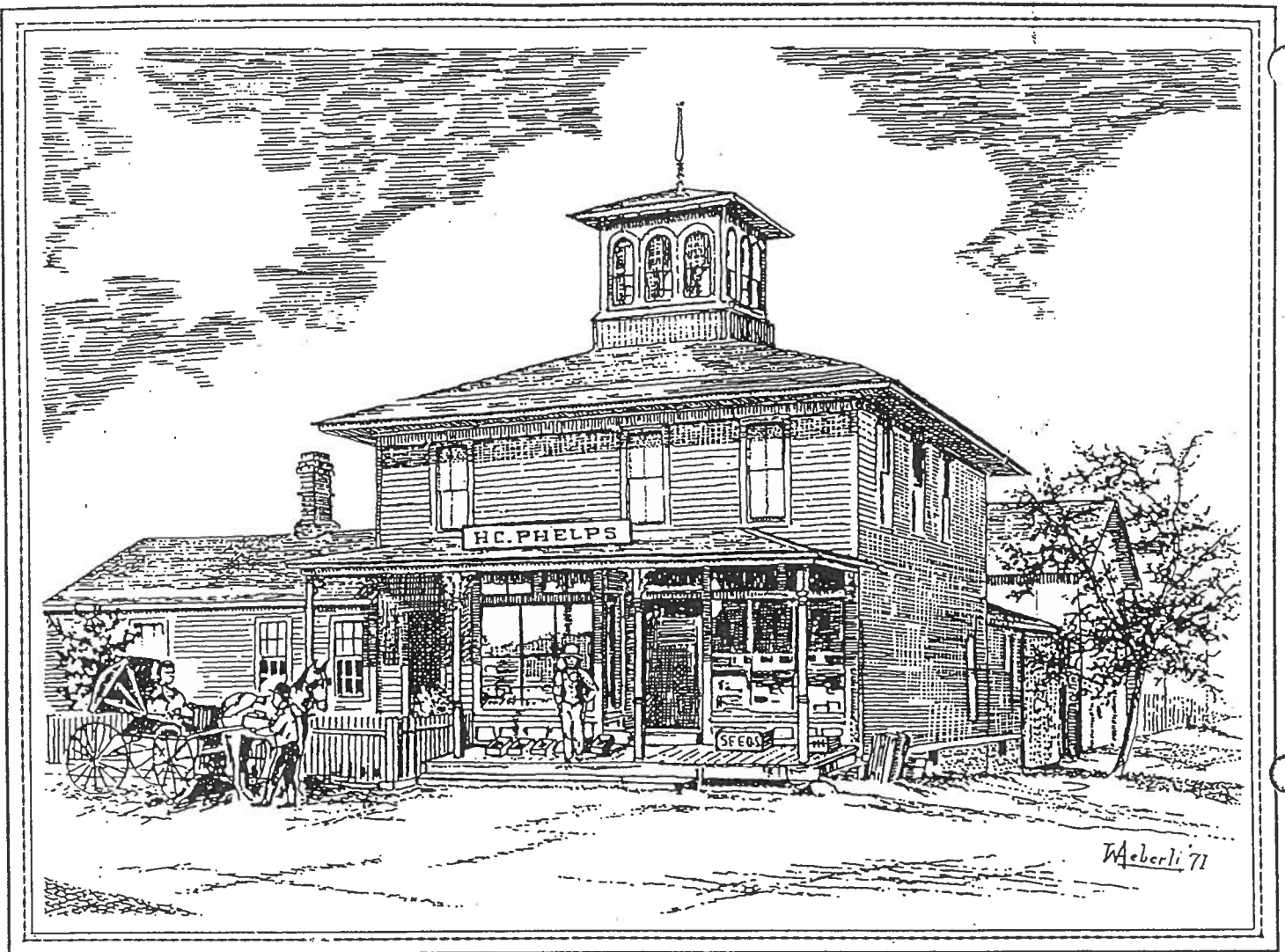
In 1993 the building was purchased by brothers Jewett C. and David A. Burke, who are renovating it for office use.

21. See final report for bibliography; site visit and interview with David A. Burke, 11/1994.



*Phelps Grocery,*

*631 North Greece Road.*



## *H.C. Phelps--General Store*

By William Aeberli

Pushing a grocery cart through well-stocked numbered aisles in today's cavernous Super Market is an example of America's progress since the days of the rural general store. Although the grocery chains of the 1970s are the ultimate in modern food supply and distribution, what is noticeably lacking compared to yesteryear, is "atmosphere."

It is the atmosphere of familiarity and friendliness --

a personal encounter of customer-clerk or storekeeper relationship; business transactions on a "first-name" basis -- all these things were taken for granted when our Grandparents traded at their store.

True, times have changed! We are no longer an agriculturally oriented nation and the general store served its purposes until our country became industrialized and urban-centered.

Thus, the old-time trading

centers that dotted every American rural hamlet and crossroad have long ago disappeared -- few, if any, remain for posterity except as museum pieces in restored villages. Yet, a shell of a once, well-known general store remains at the Southwest corner of North Greece and Latta Rds.

The crossroads building is 135 years old and a "merchandising landmark" in the Town of Greece. Today, it is known as The North Greece Food Market, owned by...

(Continued on Page 5)

ARTICLE IN  
GREECE POST  
AUGUST

1971

Sold everything from A to Z

# Phelps' family store

(Continued from Page 1)

and operated by Leu Bonsignore and family. Years ago, the building was home, business quarters and post office of Henry C. Phelps -- the most popular merchant in North Greece when the community was called Jenkins Corners.

Before the Civil War, the Phelps family settled in this part of our town. Alfred Phelps was a merchant -- his wife, Mary, bore him 5 children. Henry C. Phelps, born in 1838 was their second child. When a post office was established "in a store" July 29, 1850, Alfred Phelps was appointed first postmaster; Mary Phelps succeeded him in 1855.

\* \* \*

Henry C. Phelps followed in his father's footsteps early in life; the Monroe County Directory for 1869-1870 lists him as dealer in dry goods and groceries. Also, he was appointed postmaster twice, in 1880 and again in 1897.

For many years, this merchant of yesteryear served his community in various way. By the turn of the century when he was 62, H.C. Phelps -- Dry Goods, Staples & Fancy Groceries was the "A & P" of North Greece. Practically everyone in the area and as far away as the ponds traded or received their mail at his store.

\* \* \*

Although there were two general stores at Jenkins Corners until around 1912, Phelps had the greater volume of business and a reputation. His competitor removed to Rochester when the southeast corner store was torn down to make way for a new hotel, at the present DeMay's Hotel.

It is always a pleasure to interview Al Speer of North Greece. His detailed recollections of the old General Store he knew as a lad helped me write another chapter of town history when Greece was rural.

"The most important errand I made for my Father," Al began, "was walking down to the store for

counters in each side of the store with stools, and between each stool was a brass spittoon. And it seemed most every evening, the men folk were always in there after working hours, sometimes knee-deep, trying their luck as to who could tell the biggest lie.

\* \* \*

"I wasn't allowed in the store when the men folk were congregating because my parents didn't like the language they used. I used to dream that one day I would be big enough to go down there in the evenings and join in with the crowd!"

"I still recall," Al chuckled, "when entering the store, the first thing that caught my eye was a box on the top shelf labeled: Women's Merino Pants -- size 40. You see, Henry Phelps sold everything from A to Z, Sears, and Roebuck had nothing on him. And he did such a whale of a business he employed up to five clerks."

"In those days, you had to be supplied with everything because the nearest stores were down at Charlotte -- traveling wasn't the same in the horse and buggy days. And people rarely paid cash for their supplies -- it was usually put on credit or folks would come in with eggs or crocks of butter to trade."

\* \* \*

Henry C. Phelps did sell everything from A to Z! Shoes, hats, work clothes, boots, straw hats, sunbonnets, aprons, tobacco of all kinds. Hardware, tins and pans, cutlery, jack-knives of all sizes, nails, gutters, scythes, sickles, baskets, new-fangled lawnmowers.

There were Crossman Brothers Seeds in packages and bulk, clover seeds in three bushel bags, kerosene, kerosene lamps, wicks and globes, gloves, wallpaper, house and barn paint, window shades and school supplies, brushes, buckets and other sundry items, bolts of cloth, needles, pins, buttons, brooms, patent medicines and of course, a well-stocked and

and as post office headquarters -- stamps and money orders.

"Although H.C. didn't sell much candy," Speer said, "I'll always remember that pail of chocolate drops. One of my ambitions was to have enough money, some day, to go buy me a pail."

"What kind of a person was Henry C. Phelps," I asked.

"Well," he said, as if paying tribute to this well-known North Greece merchant of yesteryear, "H.C. wasn't young when I was a lad, but he was a kind person, a short man with chin whiskers. And, much to the chagrin of his customers, his hobby was fixing pumps."

\* \* \*

"If some one was having trouble with their pump, they would always call H. C. Phelps. And that man would go down and work on that pump, all day if need be, to get it working again. He wouldn't leave until he got it working! He often as not asked nothing for his services either. Boy, his customers would get so upset with him because they thought he should be back minding the store."

\* \* \*

To contrast "marketing day" 71 years ago with the automobile and the super market I asked Speer to describe the scene at Jenkins Corners around the turn of the century; when there was no electricity, when the roads were not paved and echoed to the rhythm of horse drawn wagons and buggys.

# Phelps' family store

By William Aeberli

To contrast "marketing day" 71 years ago with the automobile and the super market I asked Speer to describe the scene at Jenkins Corners around the turn of the century, when there was no electricity, when the roads were not paved and echoed to the rhythm of horse drawn wagons and buggys.

\* \* \*

"It was tradition for farm folks in the outer areas to come down to the store on week-ends. In those days, people always brought their 5-gallon cans to be filled with kerosene. Also, they would have a jug for molasses and a jug for vinegar. Years ago, most everything came in barrels and was sold from barrels -- milk crackers, flour, sugar, etc.

"Sometimes, if you

happened by the store and looked in and the clerks weren't busy, they would be measuring out sugar from a barrel and filling up 5-pound sacks. Even oatmeal was sold by the pound as it wasn't packaged then -- you didn't have the varieties of breakfast cereals as you have today

"And Henry C. Phelps owned a special wagon that was designed to carry barrels. Every other day, if I can recall, his drivers would go down to Rochester and haul back kerosene. H.C. even hauled kerosene all the way over to Hilton to the stores in that village.

"For the convenience of his customers, H.C. had two peddler wagons. His employees would pile a "little of everything" on these wagons and one would be used to service the Summer

people down at the cottages along the lake where there weren't any stores. The other wagon made the rounds to various sections of North Greece."

Although meat was not sold at Phelps' store at the turn of the century, this item was not as frequently consumed as a daily member of the supper table as today. Years ago, most people couldn't afford "store-bought" meat as often, reserving it for week-ends and special occasions.

There was a traveling meat market servicing North Greece residents when Al Speer was a lad. A man named Mike Conklin came out from Parma in a covered "Democrat" wagon and sold meat from farm house to farm house as well as folks around Jenkins Corners' intersection. Cuts of meat were laid out neatly on wooden slats over chunks of ice and customers could choose from a variety.

"In what part of the store was the Post Office located?" I asked.

"I believe it was near the doorway to Phelps' living quarters, but it seems they moved it around from time to time. You see, although Henry Phelps was postmaster

... Most everything

came in  
barrels



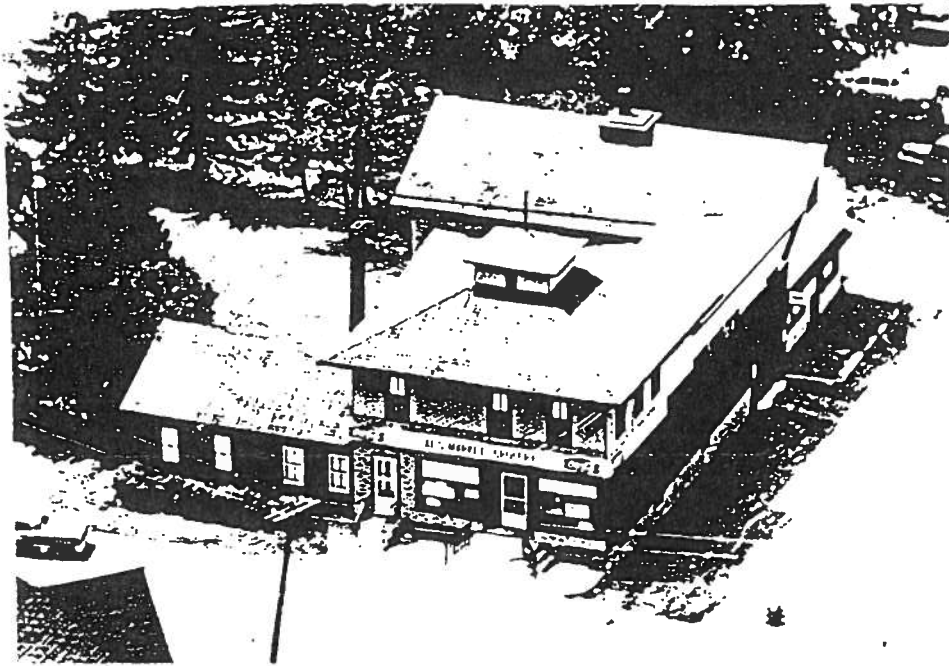
and the station was in his name, Charlie Toal did the clerking behind the cage. Charlie did the work so well, learning the trade, he eventually went down to Rochester and got a job at the city post office."

Speer was not certain when his grandfather was living on the Ridge at Manitou if mail for North Greece came out by stage to West Greece, but he is sure, during his youth, the mail from Rochester came to Jenkins Corners by way of Greece Station (now torn down) on the "Hojack Line."

Today, only a few remaining souls possess the memories of one of America's greatest and now, nostalgic, institutions: the rural general store. When Henry C. Phelps retired, the corner establishment continued on under new management, and proprietorships down to the present day.

General merchandise has been sold at this site since before Abraham Lincoln occupied the White House. As if it was tradition, Lew Bonsignore's North Greece Food Market carries on selling groceries, choice of meats, sundry items even paint!





1948 - 1965

Phelps Store at

431 North Greece Road



1965 - 1981

(cupola removed)



